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CPYRGHT CPYRGHT

CIA Recruiter Curran

The Invisible Government's Highly Visible Man

CPYRGHT

by Dick Cain

This is a story about Lawrence Curran.

It tells where he lives, where he comes from, where he went to school, where he works and used to work, the names of his wife and children and much more.

It even tells his telephone numbers and is accompanied by a photograph of him.

Such "revelations" appear here every week, but seldom, if ever, have we done it knowingly about an employee of the top-secret Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

If we were anything but the wholesome family newspaper we are, this might be taken as an irresponsible breach of national security or a muckraker's sensational stripping of the spy cloak.

No Cloak

But it's a non-existent cloak and meant to be. Curran's about as visible as anyone can be who works for what's been called the "invisible government".

Readers of the daily newspapers know of his appearance on the University of Minnesota campus last month. The White Bear Lake man was the object of student protests, one of them a "love-in".

While Curran was recruiting candidates for the CIA, members of the Students for Democratic Action were recruiting for the CIL (Citizens in Love). Protesters distributed daisies and leaflets which read, "We choose to celebrate what the CIA does not stand for: Love, gentleness, openness, honesty, liberty and peace."

"To join Citizens in Love, you need not meet any standards, nor perform any duties except to watch the clouds, smile at one another, talk with friends or meet your lover."

"If you want to belong you do."

"If you are turned on by bursting buds, blue sky, thunderstorms, or beautiful people, then you belong to CIL. Or if you would rather sit in a dark room and get stoned, you may belong anyway."

Sitting in a well lit room in

the basement of the Federal Office Building, 212 Third Ave., Minneapolis, Curran commented on the demonstrations in an interview last week.

He said he was aware, of course, of the demonstrations, but the closest he came to a direct confrontation was observing a "love-in" daisy on the desk of one of the placement office girls.

No Quarrel

"I have no quarrel with these kids," he said, "with young people making their feelings felt. Everyone has a right to their opinion."

The appointment with Curran was easily made. While his office number (332-4007) was obtained from his wife at home (number, 429-5934), it can be gotten from "information" (and is expected to appear in the telephone book along with another CIA number).

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CURRAN, of White Bear Lake, is sometimes greeted at college campuses with student protests.

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Invisible Government

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When you call, Curran's secretary answers, "332-4007", asks your name and the nature of your business.

Outside the Federal building, which houses recruiting offices for the military services, there are no CIA posters among the "Uncle Sam Wants You" pitches for the Army, Navy and Marines. The door to Curran's office simply says "60B".

Friendly Smile

Curran greets you with a quick, friendly smile. His 41 years, greying and thinning dark hair, five foot ten inch frame and compact 180 pounds or so don't bring to mind the James Bond of movie fame but you nevertheless feel a Hollywood (or CIA) makeup man has something to work with.

But the Bond game is not Curran's anyway. Instead of enemy agents or plots, he's looking for young men and women to join the CIA or "The Agency", as he calls it. He's not even looking for "Bond types", he says.

As he covers the universities and colleges in Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Wisconsin, he has in mind persons who will make government researchers, analysts, stenographers and clerks.

We're looking for young persons of good character and integrity, someone who can get involved, the kind of person who is looking for significant work."

Joined in July

Curran joined the CIA last July, after having served as a caseworker for the department of public relief in Minneapolis, a salesman for 3M Co., running his own business (in Oklahoma), rejoining 3M Co. in marketing and sales management, and serving as executive vice president of Highway Display Co.

He said he had "always wanted to get into government service." The move began two years ago.

"I was in Philadelphia for the Highway Display and I came across (Allen) Dulles's book, 'The Craft of Intelligence'."

Though he knew he should be getting to bed early to be fresh for his presentation the next morning, he said he began reading "and couldn't go to sleep until I finished. It was about three in the morning before I turned in. The book really interested me in this as a way of life. The Agency sounded like the type of thing I would like to be involved in."

Quite a Processing

After writing the CIA, submitting an application and going through "quite a processing", he became a member of the Agency. "When they told me they wanted me to recruit, I thought 'Oh, my God,' but I have found this most enjoyable." The joy, he added, is found in matching youngsters to a job they will grow in... showing them which way to go.

If it's "the Agency," he said, of course he has no reservations about it, for one "never has to do anything that's morally objectionable to him."

He added, "I would love to have my own kids work here."

And my wife too, if she could do secretarial work."

Curran and his wife, Phyllis, live at 2235 Carlyle Court, White Bear Lake, with their three children, Susan, who next year will enter Hamline University, Curran's alma mater, and two boys, Kevin who will be a high school sophomore next year and David, in the seventh grade.

A native of St. Paul, Curran attended Jackson grade school and Washington high school. He's lived in White Bear since 1956, has coached Babe Ruth league baseball teams and was president of his church, Redeemer Lutheran.

No Moral Conflict

He putters in the yard, watches Twins baseball, looks forward to a fishing trip to Canada. And when he's not enjoying his family ("spending more time listening to them now than talking") he sandwiches in reading, hopefully, at least, the periodicals he subscribes to: "Time", "Newsweek", "Foreign Affairs", and "National Geographic".

There's the "spy literature" too, the entertaining kind like James Bond: "I've read every one of Ian Fleming's novels, think he's very good... he left out the garbage, the descriptive stuff."

And the technical literature: "Strategic Intelligence" by Sherman Kent.

And the Bible.

For himself, he said, the questions raised about the work of the CIA by the critics and protesters were ones he had resolved. He said he has no "moral reservations, no moral conflict" about it.

Questions about the CIA's organization or widely known cloak and dagger activities he said he could not answer or knew nothing about.

"I know," he said, "I am not personally involved in anything morally objectionable."